CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION
1.1 Introduction

Achieving excellence and winning medals in Olympics and other international sports events has been the matter of pride for all nations of the world. The growing role of sports in the society, media attention, national honour and international prestige have made participation and winning of medals in competitive sports, a matter of great significance. Over the years, competition at international events has become intensive. The increased competition between various countries to win various championships and coveted medals in tournaments has pressurized their governments to increase their budgetary allocation and adopt a more strategic elite sports policy (Green & Houlihan, 2005). Countries have been spending sizeable resources and providing best of facilities to the top sports persons for coaching, training etc. on a long term basis for enabling them to perform their best in various international sports events and bringing laurels to the country (Green and Oakley, 2001).

There has been a sea change over the years, in terms of the manner in which the competitive sports are played, practiced and perceived at the national and international levels. The standards and levels of endurance, fitness and performance displayed by sportspersons have improved exponentially. The number of competitive sports disciplines has increased with the inclusion of many games indigenous to various regions of the world. With the massive growth and sophistication in the spheres of media and communications, the visibility of competitive sports has grown enormously (Chelladurai and Chang, 2000, Chalip, 1995). The fragmentation of several nations over the past 20 years, in combination with rising standards, has resulted in a much more competitive field in international sports. For example, the number of Olympic events has increased from 237 in 1988 to 302 in 2008; the number of nations competing at the Olympic Games has increased from 159 to 204 over the same time period (www.olympic.org). Equally important, these developments have a significant impact on the perception and expression of national aspirations and pride, mass participation, and bringing communities together. With increased political interest and investment in international sports, standards have risen.

When it comes to professional excellence at the level of individual sportsperson, it is observed that the consistently rising level of performance in various disciplines is not only related to basic training and grooming at the early stages
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(which, of course, is of vital importance), but is also a product of a complex interaction of scientific back-up comprising physiological, biomechanical, nutritional and psychological elements, use of state of the art equipments/accessories, adoption of research based modern techniques (Sahoo, P). Olympic medal winners have confirmed that training, competition, coaching, and performance enhancement must continue at the appropriate levels (Gould et al., 1999).

While considering the international scenario, it is apparent that the Australians have proudly embraced the current stars of sporting world, as they have gained international fame in a wide variety of sports. The development of Australian sports system was the initiative of Whitlam labour government in the early 1970s followed by subsequent coalition & labour governments. The “flow on” effects from the initiatives of the seventies & eighties have given Australia a sports system which is now envy of many overseas countries. During this same period, adequate facilities began to be built throughout Australia. Sports scholarships, travel assistance to international championships, talent identification and competent coaching were initiated. Notably, sports science and medicine services were upgraded and sports performances steadily improved to the point where Australia soon began to “give notice” to its international competitors that it was becoming a world sporting power. Australia’s international reputation in sports science is high, particularly in two areas. First- relates to the way in which sports science has been infused into the Australian coaching technique. Second - the way Australia has been able to identify talent and monitor training. Australia is, therefore, perceived as being able to skilfully apply sports science knowledge to sports (Bloom Field, 2002). China, for instance, uses a three-part scientific test to identify their athletes. The goal of the first test is to attribute certain characteristics of youth to certain characteristics needed for a specific sport. The second part re-evaluates the potential as performance improves, and the third estimates the highest possible performance for a particular athlete. The athletes identified as having the potential for the highest performance level are then fostered through the development process (Wu, 1992).

Considering the Indian scenario, the hosting of the inaugural Asian Games in Delhi in 1951 heralded the pioneering role of India in promoting the Olympic movement in Asia, at a time when long colonized and oppressed nations and peoples were beginning to express their independence and aspirations. Even though the National Sports Policy 1984 that encompasses various facets in respect of encouraging
sports in the country, the then formulated goals and objectives have not been realized. Hence the National Sports Policy was reformulated in 2001 in concrete terms, spelling out specific measures required to be taken in promoting sports in the country. But still, when most of the countries aim to top the medals tally in Olympics, India still struggles hard to find a place in the list of medals tally. It is an irony that, at the conclusion of the 2008 summer Olympics at Beijing, India was in the 50th position, with a total of 3 medals (1 Gold and 2 Bronze), as compared to a tally of 100 medals earned by China and 110 medals by USA. India got a gold medal in the Beijing Olympics after a period of 28 years. It is only in the 2008 Beijing Olympics, we have got a solitary gold medal in shooting (other than in Hockey). The six medals (2 silver and 4 bronze medals) in London Olympics 2012 is the highest number of medals won by India in Olympics. But it failed to retain the gold medal secured in Beijing Olympics.

Similar to Australia, even though our government formulate specific schemes to promote sports, but the standard of our players in international competitions are not impressive. The department-related parliamentary standing committee on human resource development in its 185th report (2006), on promotion of sports in our country, listed down various problems and issues hampering sports development in India. One among them was the inadequate importance given to sports sciences. The committee has observed that the scientific backup in sports is in a rudimentary stage. The knowledge of sports sciences has not been infused in training the Indian players as it is obvious that most of our players frequently suffer from injuries, decreased performance or drop out of the sport completely which affect the prospects of the country in sports.

Among the sports sciences, sports physiotherapy, “a frontline work in treating sports injuries” (Chan, 1986), has not been given adequate importance in India. The physiotherapy profession has developed rapidly over the years, incorporating a progressively greater depth and breadth of knowledge and skills (Bennett & Grant, 2004). This has been facilitated by the development of post qualification training and postgraduate education in a variety of clinical areas. The vast knowledge and skill base has led to the development of specialization in physiotherapy (Bulley and Donaghy, 2005). Sports physiotherapy has emerged as a prominent specialisation of physiotherapy.
In India, the specialization process in physiotherapy started in the late nineties and soon the number of colleges/universities offering post graduate program in sports physiotherapy increased rapidly. Even though the number of physiotherapists who specialize in sports physiotherapy increasing each year, there is a lack of recognition of the specialization by the stake holders of sports industry. Moreover, sports physiotherapists are not given adequate importance in India. Some sports persons, who understand the importance, rush to foreign countries whenever they suffer from an injury of serious nature or for expert guidance, even though India produces numerous sports physiotherapists every year.

1.2 Statement of problem

Even though the Indian government has stated in its National Sports Policy 2001 that experts would be associated with each sports discipline, currently among the physiotherapists who accompany the elite teams, only few are sports physiotherapists. At the national and the state levels, the sports coach doubles as a physiotherapist, trainer and psychologist. Even though India has many sports physiotherapists, they are not engaged by the athletes or by the federations. At the grass root level, players entirely depend on the coaches for their guidance and advice related to sports sciences. This scenario creates a situation of non utilization of available human resource. Hence the need arise to assess the quantum of the utilization of the sports physiotherapy services and its awareness in India, in order to find the flaws in Indian sporting system and to suggest ways for optimal utilization of the knowledge of sports physiotherapy for the betterment of the athletes.

1.3 Aims and Objectives of the study

1. To determine the quantum of utilization of sports physiotherapy services by the Indian sport system.
2. To find the level of awareness about sports physiotherapy in Indian sport system.
3. To find the reason for the under utilization of sports physiotherapy services in India.
4. To suggest ways for infusion and proper utilization of sports physiotherapy knowledge in Indian sport system.
1.4 Hypothesis
Indian sports system lack significant awareness and underutilize the services of sports physiotherapy.

1.5 Significance of the study
By determining the level of awareness about sports physiotherapy and the quantum of utilization of sports physiotherapy services, the present study would help to elicit and analyze the reasons for sports physiotherapy not taking its roots in the country so far.

1.6 Operational Definition
Physiotherapy services:
The term, ‘physiotherapy services’, in the title of the research indicates sports physiotherapy services.